

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 AF-10 ARA-10 EA-10 EUR-12

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00

PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

TRSE-00 /104 W

-----039896 092048Z /72

O 092013Z MAR 78

FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9940

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN NEW YORK 00833

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: APER, MARR, XF

SUBJECT: SAFETY OF UN MILITARY OBSERVERS IN LEBANON

1. UN SECRETARIAT (LIU) INFORMED US MARCH 9 THAT UN HAS DECIDED TO TAKE TWO MEASURES WHICH UN HOPES WILL BE EFFECTIVE IN ATTEMPTING TO PROTECT LIVES AND PROPERTY OF UNMO'S. FIRST ACTION IS TO OBTAIN ISRAELI AGREEMENT TO UN'S RESUPPLYING AND RELIEVING OP'S IN CHRISTIAN-CONTROLLED AREA FROM THE ISRAELI SIDE OF THE BORDER. FOR THE TIME BEING THIS WOULD AFFECT OP'S LAB AND HIN ONLY. SIILASVUO AND ERSKINE HAVE APPROACHED IDF LIAISON OFFICER ON MORNING OF MARCH 9. UN SECRETARIAT HAS ASKED FOR OUR HELP AS WELL AS THAT OF FRENCH (WHO MADE DEMARCHE MARCH 8 TO LIU) AND OF IRISH, TO SUPPORT UN'S REQUEST TO IDF. WE REPLIED THAT WE WOULD CONVEY REQUEST IMMEDIATELY TO STATE DEPARTMENT.

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2. SECOND ACTION IS FOR SIILASVUO TO RELEASE TO PRESS BRIEF, FACTUAL ACCOUNTS OF RECENT INCIDENTS. TWO RELEASES HAVE BEEN PREPARED BY SIILASVUO. UN HAS REVISED AND IS INFORMING GOI IN ADVANCE OF RELEASES. UN INTENDS TO EXPLAIN TO ISRAELIS THAT UNTIL NOW PUBLICITY HAS BEEN AVOIDED WITH HOPE THAT SITUATION WOULD IMPROVE; PRESSURE IS STRONGER NOW SINCE AN UNMO HAS BEEN WOUNDED. UN DESIRES TO PREVENT

RECURRENCE OF SUCH INCIDENT.

3. FIRST RELEASE AS REVISED BY UN HEADQUARTERS READS APPROXIMATELY AS FOLLOWS:

QTE: ON MARCH 7 DURING THE RELIEF OPERATION TO OP KHIAM LOCATED IN THE SOUTHERN LEBANON VILLAGE OF EL KHIAM, UN OBSERVERS BECAME POSITIONED IN THE MIDST OF FIREFIGHTING BETWEEN THE DEFACTO FORCES IN THE CHRISTIAN-CONTROLLED AREA TELL CHERICK AND THE PALESTINIAN/LEFTIST FORCES LOCATED IN THE VILLAGE EL BALELL (SP?). ONE UN OBSERVER SUFFERED A BROKEN ARM AND SHRAPNEL WOUND FROM MORTAR ROUNDS FIRED FROM POSITIONS IN THE CHRISTIAN-CONTROLLED AREA. ADDITIONALLY, TWO CLEARLY IDENTIFIED UN VEHICLES WERE COMPLETELY DESTROYED BY TANK AND MORTAR FIRE FROM THE CHRISTIAN-CONTROLLED AREA. THE OBSERVER WAS TAKEN BY A UN AMBULANCE TO A BEIRUT HOSPITAL. THE RELIEF OPERATION WAS A NORMALLY SCHEDULED RELIEF OF AN OP AT A TIME AND OVER ROUTES KNOWN TO BOTH SIDES. ADDITIONALLY RELIEF OPERATION TO THE OP HIN WAS STOPPED ON THE SAME DAY BY SOLDIERS IN THE CHRISTIAN-CONTROLLED VILLAGE RMAICH. AFTER ESCORTING THE OBSERVERS AND VEHICLES TO THE OP THESE SOLDIERS STOLE THE VEHICLE, UN EQUIPMENT AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS OF THE OBSERVERS. LATER THE VEHICLE WAS RETURNED BY OTHER SOLDIERS FROM THE CHRISTIAN-CONTROLLED AREA BUT WITHOUT THE PERSONAL BELONGINGS OF THE OBSERVERS. END QUOTE.
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4. UN PLANS TO RELEASE THE ABOVE PROMPTLY. THE SECOND RELEASE DEALING WITH AN INCIDENT ON MARCH 9 AT OP HIN WHERE ARMED MEN WEARING IDF UNIFORMS STOLE A UN VEHICLE, UN PROPERTY AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS HAS BEEN DRAFTED AND IS UNDERGOING REVISION NOW AT UN HEADQUARTERS. THIS RELEASE WILL PRESUMABLY FOLLOW THE FIRST ONE BY A COUPLE OF DAYS.

5. COMMENT: ON REQUEST FOR OUR SUPPORT IN REQUEST TO GOI ON PERMITTING RELIEF THROUGH ISRAELI TERRITORY, WE RESPONDED IN NONCOMMITAL WAY NOTING ONLY THAT REQUEST WOULD BE RELAYED TO THE DEPARTMENT. OFF HAND IT SEEMS TO US THAT WHILE RELIEF OPERATIONS MIGHT BE MORE SAFELY CONDUCTED ON ISRAELI SIDE, HIJACKING VEHICLES AND UN EQUIPMENT HAS BECOME SO PREVALENT AND PROFITABLE THAT THERE IS RISK OF THE STEALING OCCURRING ANYWAY AND THUS TRANSFERRING THESE INCIDENTS TO ISRAELI SOIL. MOREOVER ISRAELI KNOWN LACK OF ENTHUSIASM FOR UNTSO OPERATIONS SHOULD ALSO BE CONSIDERED. YOUNG

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SAFETY, SECURITY, TRUCE OBSERVERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978USUNN00833
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780106-0924
Format: TEL
From: USUN NEW YORK
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780385/aaaacueb.tel
Line Count: 114
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 33564cca-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION IO
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3380432
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SAFETY OF UN MILITARY OBSERVERS IN LEBANON
TAGS: APER, MARR, PORG, XF, LE
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/33564cca-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014